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# SOVIET-SPONSORED SOCIETIES OF FRIENDSHIP AND CULTURAL RELATIONS

October 1957

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Soviet-Sponsored Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations

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### Appendix

List of Soviet, East European, Chinese, North Korean and North Vietnamese sponsored Friendship and Cultural Relations Societies.  
(This list includes all societies of this nature which have been reported through 31 July 1957.)

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I. Foreword. This brief paper is concerned with societies of friendship and societies of cultural relations with the Soviet Union, their purposes, and the overt and covert Soviet employment of these societies. Primarily they are propaganda outlets which reflect Soviet ideas on any given political, economic or military matter. They are found not only in Free World countries but also in other Communist countries where they try to bring about better relations with the Soviet Union. Currently the societies are agitating for cessation of nuclear weapons tests, for peace and friendship between nations (on Communist terms) and for better understanding between the peoples of the Soviet Union and those of other countries.

There is an effort under way to make the societies appear independent from the Communist parties in order that they may reach a larger propaganda audience. Soviet and Communist control over the societies, however, is never relinquished. The Soviet All-Union Society for Cultural Relations Abroad, traditionally known by the abbreviation of its Russian title, VOKS, is the unit which has been responsible for many years for the support and guidance of these societies. In addition, there is usually a local Communist party fraction active within the friendship society and Communists are in some leading positions to assure Soviet guidance and control.

In the second part of the study there is an outline of the use Soviet intelligence services have made of Soviet-sponsored friendship societies. The revelations of Vladimir Petrov, a Committee for State Security (KGB) officer who defected in Australia in 1954, concerning the exploitation of the Australia-Soviet Friendship Society are very helpful to an understanding of Soviet use of these groups for espionage. In most cases the Soviets have a witting agent or collaborator within the leadership of the society; other members who contribute information or assistance usually are unaware that they are aiding a foreign intelligence service. Indications that the friendship societies are still used for espionage are briefly outlined.

A short description of societies of friendship sponsored by the other Communist countries of East Europe is included in this paper. Their propaganda functions as well as the services they provide for the satellite intelligence services are of

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the same nature as those carried out by the Soviet-sponsored societies. An analysis of propaganda and intelligence functions of the Chinese Communist-sponsored friendship/cultural relations societies has not been included here.

The Appendix lists all the friendship and cultural relations societies sponsored by the Soviet Union, the East European Communist countries, the Chinese Communist, North Korean and North Vietnam governments which have been reported through 31 July 1957. From the continually increasing number of Chinese-sponsored friendship and cultural relations societies, it appears that they will be used to a progressively greater extent to promote Chinese political, economic and intelligence interests abroad.

The friendship societies have sponsored hundreds of delegations of visitors to and from the Soviet Union. Since 1954 VOKS has spent tremendously large sums of money for travel expenses of these delegations. Persons traveling to the Soviet Union as members of the delegations have been carefully chosen by the local VOKS representative (attached to the Soviet diplomatic installation) and by Communist leaders of the friendship society; they have been instructed concerning what aspects of Soviet life they should observe and report about upon their return. Full propaganda exploitation of these projects in which the Soviets have heavily invested has thus been assured.

Documents from the Soviet Embassy in Canberra provided by Vladimir Petrov show that the Soviets have other uses for delegations visiting Moscow besides acquiring new friends. Soviet intelligence services observe the delegations closely during their stay in Moscow and send reports to their field representatives about visitors who appear to be potential recruits for intelligence work. The field representatives are instructed to check further into the backgrounds and potentialities of these people in their home countries.

Thus friendship and cultural relations societies have furthered the propaganda and intelligence work of the Soviet government since the 1920's. Because of the natural overt contact Embassy personnel can have with such groups in places where there are Soviet diplomatic missions, it is probably that the Soviets will continue to exploit them to the greatest extent possible.

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## II. The Friendship and Cultural Relations Societies as Soviet Propaganda Instruments

1. Soviet Emphasis on the Cultural Relations Program. The desire to promote pro-Soviet attitudes and ideas among intellectual, business, industrial and other groups in Free World countries which are not usually reached by Communist party or front organization propaganda has led to a greatly expanded cultural offensive. This is currently manifested in Free World countries by the founding of new friendship or cultural relations societies and the reactivation of others which had become inactive; and by a greatly increased number of friendship and cultural delegation exchanges between the Soviet Union and other countries, exchanges which ostensibly are sponsored by the friendship or cultural relations societies but are partly or wholly subsidized by VOKS.

Soviet-sponsored cultural delegations have increased in number each year since 1954. In that year, for example, 84 exchanges with West European countries were arranged under the categories of culture, peace and friendship. In 1955 the number of Soviet cultural delegation exchanges with West European countries increased to 114.

In 1956 a total of 475 delegations went to the Soviet Union from West European countries; this figure included groups described as cultural, tourist, professional, technical, scientific, economic, governmental, labor, sports, Communist Party and Communist front groups. A total of 469 Soviet delegations of all kinds traveled to West European countries in 1956. Of a total number of 1327 delegations going to East European Communist countries in 1956, 225 were "cultural" delegations. The exact number of these which went to the Soviet Union is not available, but it is probable that the 1955 figure of 114 was surpassed.

The establishment of a Soviet State Committee for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries is another indication of the present importance of the cultural relations program. The formation of this Soviet agency was announced on 27 May 1957. Although its exact responsibilities have not yet been determined, the new agency probably will coordinate propaganda pertinent to the cultural relations program and administer some parts of the exchange program—particularly that portion which concerns

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foreign official personalities. Much of its work will probably relate to the improvement of Soviet relations with the East European satellite countries. Another task of the new State Committee will undoubtedly be to reactivate and intensify the exchange program to the basis it achieved in 1955 and early 1956 prior to the wholesale cancellations of exchanges by Western travellers following the Soviet intervention in Hungary. It may undertake the preparation of Soviet "cultural" publications intended for foreign distribution.

2. Role of the Friendship/Cultural Relations Societies in the Soviet Cultural Offensive. In many Free World countries these groups are conspicuously active elements in the over-all Soviet cultural offensive. This has been especially true in certain Latin American, Far Eastern and other areas where such groups have been influential among non-Communists in bringing about more favorable attitudes towards the Soviet Union and in bringing about action desired by the Soviets—such as increased trade, establishment or re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, adoption of a neutralist stand on certain international issues, etc.

The friendship societies have been responsible to a large degree for effective support mustered in Western countries for the Soviet Union in a moment of need. During World War II after the attack of Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union, the societies in Great Britain and the United States were particularly successful in drawing to their folds prominent British and American citizens, in achieving mass strength and in developing sympathy and aid for the Soviet war effort. The lesson to be drawn from past overt use of these societies by the USSR is that wherever a Soviet propaganda need cannot be met adequately through the work of the foreign Communist parties or their front groups in a given area, the Soviets utilize the friendship organizations.

3. Origin and Brief Historical Outline of the Friendship Societies. These associations, formed to promote good will toward the USSR, were originally organized as front groups of the Communist parties; their propaganda, like that of the parties, was first directed at labor groups. In 1927 under the leadership

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of an organizing committee headed by British and Russian Communists, an International Association of Friendship Societies with the Soviet Union was founded. This functioned as an international front of the Comintern and its propaganda work apparently was controlled by the Agitprop Department of the Executive Committee of the Comintern.

At the founding congress a lengthy resolution was passed announcing the purposes of the Association. In brief these were: support for the policies of the Soviet government, for the struggle against imperialism and for the world labor movement. The Soviets regarded the International Association as "an international organization expressing the sympathy and solidarity of the broad masses of the international proletariat with the first proletarian state."\*

From approximately 1933 when the Fascist threat to the Soviet Union became progressively greater, attempts were made in varying degrees, depending upon the specific friendship society involved, to dissociate these groups from the Communist parties. National sections of the International Association of Friends of the Soviet Union were criticized for appealing only to Communists or Communist sympathizers. Failure to appeal to non-Communist groups (accompanied no doubt by lack of Soviet support as a result of this failure) led to the disintegration of many national sections by 1941 and the disappearance of the Secretariat of the International Association.

After the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union the friendship societies began to organize support for the Soviet war effort. Appeals were issued calling for the strengthening of friendship with the Soviet Union and for aid in the fight against Fascist aggression. Propaganda issued by the societies avoided controversial subjects and stressed the need for close cooperation between the Soviet Union and its Western Allies.

With the end of the war and the growth of East-West tensions, the propaganda of the friendship societies changed tone and direction. Strong criticism was made of all Free World

\* Vaksov, V., "Druz'ya Sovetskogo Soyuza" (Friends of the Soviet Union), Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, vol. 23, p. 526.

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government policies which were in opposition to those of the Soviet Union. The societies exposed themselves as unrelenting mouthpieces of the Soviet Union, fiercely counterattacking all its opponents.

4. Administration of Friendship/Cultural Relations Societies.

Until approximately 1941, direct responsibility for the administration of these organizations was assigned to the Secretariat of the International Association of Friendship Societies with the Soviet Union, (IAFS). The Secretariat was first located in Germany, but in 1933 with the Nazi assumption of power and the prohibition of its activity, it was moved to The Netherlands. The Secretariat drew up work plans and projects for the national societies (or sections) and prepared reports analyzing their achievements and weaknesses. As in the case of some of the other Comintern international fronts the Soviet affiliate of the international organization appears to have gradually assumed direction over the foreign sections (in this case, societies), replacing the International Secretariat.

The All-Union Society for Cultural Relations Abroad (VOKS) was created by a decree of the Soviet Council of People's Commissars on 8 August 1925 as a "public society". Actually it functioned as a state organization with its work, like that of all Soviet State institutions, closely checked by a Communist Party unit within its staff. Ostensibly VOKS appeared to be the Soviet equivalent of the other national friendship societies which were affiliated with the IAFS. A stated reason for the founding of VOKS was to facilitate Soviet access to Western cultural and scientific literature. A second reason was to assure that favorable information about the Soviet Union was disseminated abroad.

As early as 1927 VOKS was assigned specifically to assist the friendship societies in Germany and the United States because they distributed favorable information about the Soviet Union. It is probable that VOKS assumed direct leadership over all the societies when the Secretariat of the IAFS was dissolved; details of this transfer of responsibility and the dissolution of the IAFS are not

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known. The reactivation of several of the friendship societies in 1942 and the successful propaganda work they carried out for the Soviet Union during World War II indicates that there was active VOKS direction during this period.

Abroad, wherever they have had diplomatic missions, the Soviets have maintained dual systems of guidance and control over the friendship societies. One of these is executed by the VOKS officers or Cultural relations officers who are attached to Soviet diplomatic establishments. The other is maintained by the local Communist party. Communists hold key offices in a friendship society even though prominent non-Communists may be in other leading positions. Also, there is frequently a Communist fraction in the friendship society, as in most Communist front organizations. This unit, during closed meetings held without the knowledge of other friendship society members, determines action to be taken at general membership meetings.

The fraction has sometimes been reported to be under the direction of a Mass Organization Section of the Communist party's national headquarters. There is evidence that fractions operating in some of the friendship societies may be under the immediate direction of the Foreign Section of the Central Committee of the local Communist party. Presumably the leader of a Communist party fraction working in a friendship/cultural relations society is in close contact with a VOKS officer.

With the easing of travel controls after 1953 and the stepping up of the Soviet cultural exchange program, VOKS seems to have had an increasingly active role in guiding the friendship societies. The exact role to be played by VOKS now that a Soviet State Committee for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries has been established remains to be seen. It seems possible that VOKS may revert to its earlier status as simply the Soviet equivalent of the foreign friendship and cultural relations societies. As such, its functions would be to receive and to entertain any unofficial (non-governmental) friendship or cultural delegations sponsored by the societies of friendship with the Soviet Union; to arrange for Soviet entertainers, lecturers, artists, etc., for programs the foreign friendship societies present and from which they can benefit from admission fees.

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It also seems possible that periodicals formerly prepared by VOKS may now be written and printed by the new State Committee. It is of interest to note in this regard that the name of the VOKS publication traditionally entitled The VOKS Bulletin was changed to Culture and Life in February 1957. The Chief of the new State Committee has a background of experience as a writer and editor in the International Section of Pravda.

5. Financing of the Friendship Societies. A society of friendship with the Soviet Union tries to be self-supporting to the greatest degree possible. It assesses membership dues, and sells literature produced by the society itself or supplied from Moscow. Entertainment it sponsors also brings some income, especially that presented by artists, musicians, sport teams, etc., from the Soviet Union. Sometimes fairly large amounts of money are derived from the showing of Soviet films. In most cases, however, an effective society of friendship with the Soviet Union is heavily financed by the Soviets—especially those which are particularly successful in disseminating ideas or views favorable to the Soviet Union, or in performing valuable intelligence work for that government.

Soviet funds for friendship societies in most areas are received through Soviet diplomatic channels. In some places funds apparently are passed directly by the VOKS officer or Cultural Relations officer to a Communist functionary of the friendship society. There is some evidence—supplied by Communist defectors of both East European satellite and Free World areas—that funds from the Soviet Union (probably from VOKS, though possibly originating with the Foreign Section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) are sent first to the Foreign Section of the Communist Party in the country in which the friendship society is located and then transferred to a Communist functionary of the friendship society.

At least one friendship society located in a Free World country was required by VOKS to submit a monthly report which included an accounting of all proceeds received from entertainment sponsored by the society. The report also included statistics concerning the number of persons who attended the public gatherings held by the friendship society and details about their reactions.

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6. Current Programs and Projects of Soviet-Sponsored Friendship/Cultural Relations Societies. Propaganda objectives of the friendship societies now are (1) furtherance of Soviet political, economic, technical and military interests and (2) promotion of friendly attitudes towards the Soviet Union. Priority targets are intellectual, political and industrial circles, although in some areas labor groups are still propaganda objectives. For example, the VOKS-supported organization in France, the France-USSR Association, sent two delegations to Moscow for May Day celebrations in 1957—one composed of persons from the professions and the other made up of factory workers.

Propaganda themes now stressed by the Soviet friendship/cultural relations societies aim (1) to promote military, economic and political programs in non-Orbit areas beneficial to the Communist bloc countries; (2) to promote the establishment or resumption of diplomatic and trade relations with the Soviet Union; (3) to promote understanding and appreciation of Soviet culture; (4) to support any action which will limit or curtail the military strength or progress of the West and extol as peace measures any minor Soviet military reduction or even Soviet troop transfers. The recent appointment to the chairmanship of VOKS of Nina POPOVA, a Soviet functionary who has had much experience in the field of "peace" propaganda, may foreshadow a focusing on this theme by the friendship societies.

In some countries branches of the friendship societies are found in nearly every town of any size. Most societies maintain information centers, libraries or reading rooms in which are placed Soviet books and publications to promote better understanding of the Soviet people. In some areas mobile libraries have been particularly successful in this work. Lectures are presented and studies are made of various aspects of Soviet culture. The societies also hold social gatherings, sponsor exhibits and undertake other activities of similar nature which promote good will. Programs in which Soviet artists, musicians, authors and athletes frequently participate are featured. (The Soviet definition of culture includes almost everything, including athletics.)

Many friendship societies include functional or activity sub-sections administered by their central executive committees. These are extended as desired in order to reach wider segments

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of the population. Activity sub-sections noted to date include the following categories: art, chess, education, films, history, law, music, science, medicine, the social sciences, the theatre, and youth. Some of the sub-sections attain large enough memberships and develop sufficient interest and support to become almost autonomous units.

At least one society is currently sponsoring a "twin city program" designed to establish relations between Soviet towns and those of the country in which the friendship society is located, on the basis of exchanges between the interested localities. The friendship societies try to assist the work of universities and other cultural institutions of both the Soviet Union and the other country concerned. A publication may be prepared by each friendship society or it may only distribute copies of Soviet publications.

In order to extend the work of the friendship societies among non-Communist groups, an effort has been made—particularly during 1956 and 1957—to disassociate them from the Communist parties. Reorganizations of the societies have occurred in some areas and non-Communists have been placed in the most prominent offices, but the Soviets—through the VOKS officers and local Communists in the society—maintain control.

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III. Covert Exploitation of Soviet Friendship Societies

The friendship and cultural relations societies offer many possibilities and assets for exploitation by the Soviet intelligence agencies. Within the leadership of the societies there is frequently a highly-trusted Communist who has access to the facilities and personnel of the society and who collaborates with Soviet intelligence (referred to hereafter as RIS) by performing any support work he is requested to do. Although this person acts as a witting agent and usually has direct contact with an RIS officer under diplomatic cover, other members of the friendship society frequently collaborate unaware of the fact that they assist a foreign intelligence service.

In some areas friendship society information centers, reading rooms, libraries, club rooms, etc., have been used by RIS officers for meetings with informants. RIS officers have been able to acquire information at friendship society gatherings or have been directed to persons who could supply information.

1. RIS Use of Friendship Societies in the 1930's and during World War II. As previously stated, one of the principal reasons for establishing VOKS was to assist the Soviet acquisition of foreign cultural and scientific literature. As also explained, the two friendship societies which received earliest support from VOKS were those in Germany and in the United States. The Soviets explained this aid as attributable to the fact that these societies did most to inspire good will toward the USSR. It is to be noted, however, that they were located in countries well advanced scientifically and technologically and were probably most productive in acquiring information for the relatively new Soviet industries and research centers. It is likely that some of the information acquired was of confidential nature.

In one of these societies there was a special department for forwarding technical, industrial and military information to the Soviet Union. The person in charge of the department appears to have been an agent of Soviet State Security (the service now known as the Committee for State Security). In the Soviet Union the VOKS organization was itself under close Soviet State Security supervision during this period. A careful study was made by this intelligence service of foreign

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scientists who supplied information through VOKS facilities.

Communists who served the RIS as witting agents within the leadership of the friendship societies did "talent spotting", looking for persons employed in sensitive positions or in some other way well qualified to provide information of interest, and performed other support services for the RIS. According to persons formerly affiliated with a Communist party or a Soviet intelligence agency, other Communists in the friendship society sometimes wittingly performed similar services.

Assistance in setting up cover firms for RIS operations reportedly was provided by people in Communist-controlled groups, including the friendship societies. Walter Krivitsky, writing of his experiences as a Soviet State Security officer assigned to procure arms and ammunition covertly for the Loyalist forces in the Spanish Civil War, described how business firms were set up in several European cities to purchase military supplies:

"Our first problem, therefore, was to create a new European chain of ostensibly independent concerns, in addition to our existing 'business' outposts, for the purpose of importing and exporting war materials... Success depended upon our selecting the right men. We had such men at our disposal. Numbers of them were in the societies allied with the various Communist Party centers abroad, such as the Friends of the Soviet Union and the many 'Leagues for Peace and Democracy'....

"Many were discreet, reliable, having the right contacts and capable of playing a role without betraying themselves. We supplied the capital. We furnished the offices. We guaranteed the profits. The men were not hard to find."\*

During World War II a Communist in a West European country who served simultaneously as a high ranking Party officer and as an RIS collaborator requested a regional functionary of the

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\* Walter Krivitsky, In Stalin's Secret Service, page 85.

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Soviet friendship society to help him contact secret Communist Party members employed in certain government offices where sensitive work was being carried out in connection with the war effort. The regional functionary complied with the request, apparently unaware of the fact that this service was performed for the benefit of the RIS.

In another case procurement of political and economic intelligence, mostly of an overt character, was carried out by an active VOKS-sponsored society for cultural relations in a western country. Information about political parties in the country was procured, collated and furnished to intelligence officers attached to the local Soviet Embassy. This included reporting about the parties' objectives, strength, sources of financial support and detailed biographic information about their leaders. Economic intelligence provided by the same cultural relations society included such data as kinds of industries, capacities of each and percentages of capital which were domestic or foreign. Agricultural production statistics were also provided to the Soviets by the society.

2. RIS and the Friendship Societies in the Postwar Period.

The most solid evidence of the support the friendship-cultural relations societies provided the RIS since World War II was contributed by Vladimir Petrov, Soviet State Security officer who defected in Australia in April 1954. RIS utilization of the friendship society in Australia included (a) the use of the society's secretary, an ardent Communist Party member, as a witting agent to supply all possible assistance and (b) employment of rank and file members of the friendship society as unwitting sources of information and support.

The unpaid secretary of the Australia-Soviet Friendship Society, Jean Ferguson, assisted the RIS in a variety of ways—arranging meetings between RIS officers and local Communist Party leaders, alerting the RIS when projected meetings with Communists would have been in jeopardy, etc. A copy of a Moscow letter which Petrov took from the Soviet Embassy showed RIS plans for Jean Ferguson to obtain information about an Egyptian national who was believed to be residing in Melbourne, Australia.

The Australia-Soviet Friendship Society's members were to

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assist unwittingly in the establishment of illegal RIS networks in Australia, according to a directive from RIS headquarters in Moscow to its representative in Canberra:

"The M.V.D. section must therefore instantly begin collecting the necessary data and compiling reports, without observing any fixed time limits, and send them in installments to M.V.D. Headquarters. For this work you may at your discretion use any cadre worker, recruited collaborator, and also the most reliable agents. For the collection of some of the data you may also exploit official possibilities open to you (lawyers of your acquaintance, members of the Australia-Russia Society, etc., without disclosing our intentions to them)."

3. RIS Use of Friendship/Cultural Delegations. The current program of cultural delegation exchanges serves not only to further understanding of the culture and people of the USSR but also to assist the RIS recruitment effort. Delegations visiting in the Soviet Union are under close scrutiny of the RIS, according to Vladimir Petrov, who stated that this observation served two purposes: (1) to discover in these presumably sympathetic groups persons who on return to their own countries would be worth "study" for recruitment into active espionage or for use as unwitting informants; (2) to determine whether or not any of the visitors were counterintelligence agents.

One Australian delegation, following attendance at an "International Conference for the Protection of Children" held in Vienna in April 1952, was invited to visit the Soviet Union at Soviet expense for May Day celebrations. In this delegation were a Miss Mary Ellen C. Lewis, a member of the Australia-Soviet Friendship Society, and a Mr. and Mrs. Les Flood. All were members of the Australian Communist Party. Soviet State Security headquarters sent the following message concerning the three Australians to its legal resident in Canberra:

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\* Report of the Royal Commission on Espionage, 22 August 1955, Sydney, Australia, page 254

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"As Enclosure No. 1 we send you particulars concerning two members of the Australian delegation which was in Russia for the First of May festivities—Flood and Lewis. Both of them, in our opinion, could be used for the fulfilment of tasks which are provided for in the plan of work of the Australian M.V.D. section.

"Instruct Antonov to make the acquaintance of Flood and Lewis for the purpose of studying them and using them along our lines.

"Inform us concerning the results."\*

All data supplied by Soviet State Security headquarters to the Canberra Resident Agent concerning these Australian Communists were correct. The intent to use these Australians if possible for intelligence purposes is clear.

There are indications that, at Soviet bidding, a friendship society may invite a Soviet "cultural" delegation to visit in its area at a moment when the presence of a specific RIS officer is desired in the locality for a brief period of time. In such a circumstance the RIS operative can reach the target area inconspicuously and conveniently as a member of a visiting Soviet delegation, and can then carry out any short-range intelligence mission—procure secret information, recruit a highly-qualified agent, or provide direction for subversive political action.

4. Current Indications of RIS Use of Friendship Societies.  
Besides the several cases which have been exposed in the past either through the work of a national security agency or through the defections of Soviet intelligence officers or Communist party members, there are many indications that friendship and cultural relations societies are now being used for RIS purposes. Among the indications are the following:

(1) The members of an Economic Department of a society for cultural relations with the Soviet Union in a Free World country were requested in late 1956 to obtain certain statistics

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\* Report of the Royal Commission on Espionage, 22 August 1955, Sydney, Australia, page 80.

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for the Soviet Union. These were to include production figures of industries and businesses in the country and records and financial balances of all public utilities and banks. Members of this Department were told that the information was to be sent to the Soviet Union "in exchange for information from there". They were told to develop contacts in banks, public entities (sic), employers' associations, economic magazines, education and student centers.

(2) Certain Communists holding leading positions in a Soviet friendship society in a Free World capital city have held discreet midnight meetings on the premises of the society with RIS officers who are under diplomatic cover.

(3) On the directing boards of two societies of friendship with the Soviet Union in Free World countries there are Communists who have been reported in the past as active in covert intelligence procurement work for their respective parties.

(4) A prominent physicist who is reported to have close working relations with the Soviets in the field of nuclear research is active in a Soviet friendship society of West Europe.

(5) On May Day, 1957, delegations from five West European societies of friendship with the Soviet Union visited Moscow. Two of these delegations were headed by persons suspected of RIS connections.

(6) Members of a society of friendship with the Soviet Union who visited Moscow in 1955 were carefully instructed by society and by Soviet Embassy officials concerning what they should observe in the Soviet Union. Each person was assigned specific subjects on which to concentrate and to report upon his return. One of the Soviet Embassy officers included in these instruction sessions was believed to be the local RIS representative. Besides the exploitation of this reporting for propaganda purposes there was possibly an RIS intention to attempt to assess the visitors' ability to observe and to report. Instances where members of youth delegations visiting the Soviet Union were instructed to do similar work have also been reported.

(7) In one Free World country there appears to be a

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concentration of members drawn from a government agency in which work of a confidential nature would normally be carried on. Although this perhaps is simply a case where one employee invites a co-worker to go along with him to a meeting or social affair sponsored by the friendship or cultural relations society, there is also the possibility that Soviet officers guiding the society intentionally have encouraged the recruitment of members from the government agency.

(8) In several Free World countries, VOKS or Cultural Attaches who are in close contact with local friendship and cultural relations societies have been identified as RIS officers.

(9) Some societies of friendship with the Soviet Union have established units or bureaus for the exchange of scientific and technical information. One of these bureaus in a Free World country planned to send circulars to all laboratories and libraries in the country offering to perform mediation services in the exchange of scientific information from the Soviet Union, to assist in translating Russian publications into the local language, etc. The bureau was to deal with the Soviet Union through the local VOKS representative exclusively. VOKS was to check the "reliability" of persons contributing to the exchange of cultural and scientific information to determine whether or not Soviet data would fall into the wrong hands. As of 1955 the only scientific organization which was reported to have benefited from this exchange of information program was one staffed entirely by Communists.

(10) As late as 1954, Soviet State Security (actually, the Committee for State Security, KGB) still maintained a unit of its personnel within the VOKS headquarters, according to Yuri Rastvorov, former State Security Lieutenant Colonel.

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IV. Societies of Friendship or Cultural Relations with East European Countries.

In most of the East European satellite countries there have been and in most cases there are still organizations parallel to the Soviet VOKS which sponsored, supported and guided societies of friendship and cultural relations. In Poland, for example, the Committee for Foreign Cultural Cooperation (Komitet Wspolpracy Kulturalnej z Zagranica, KWKZ) had this function. Like the Soviet All-Union Society for Cultural Relations Abroad (VOKS) the principal reason for the existence of the KWKZ was to arrange contacts with non-governmental or "unofficial" agencies and societies of Free World countries.

1. Administration and Functions of the Satellite-Sponsored Societies. The Polish KWKZ and the East German counterpart organization, the Society for Cultural Relations Abroad (Gesellschaft fuer Kulturelle Verbindungen mit dem Ausland) appear to have been controlled administratively by their respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs, but received policy direction from the Central Committee of the respective Communist Party. In the case of the KWKZ, direction from the Polish United Workers' Party (the Polish Communist Party) came specifically from the latter's Department of Foreign Affairs of its Central Committee.

According to information of November 1956 the KWKZ was to be liquidated on 1 January 1957. To date no information regarding a successor organization has been received. Little or no information exists about equivalent friendship-cultural sponsoring organizations in other East European states, in spite of the fact that new societies of friendship and cultural relations with these states have appeared in several Free World areas. Exceptions are new societies with Hungary and Poland: no new Hungarian-sponsored friendship or cultural relations societies have been reported since the uprisings of the fall of 1956, and only one new Polish-sponsored society has been reported thus far in 1957—the Egyptian-Polish Friendship Society which appears to have been organized in Cairo in April 1957.

In general the purposes and functions of the East European sponsored friendship and cultural relations societies have been

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similar to those of the societies of friendship or cultural relations with the Soviet Union. Primarily they are propaganda instruments for the sponsoring East European government, reflecting and disseminating its ideas on any question needing support in the area in which the societies are located. The societies have been particularly active in demanding more trade with the sponsoring country. In some Latin American countries, for example, Czech-sponsored societies of friendship or cultural relations have agitated to promote trade with Czechoslovakia.

2. Covert Exploitation of the Societies of Friendship with East European Satellite Countries. To an even greater extent than the societies of friendship with the Soviet Union, some of those with East European satellite countries have been exploited by intelligence services of the sponsoring satellite country. Cases are known where friendship society reading room or information center attendants have served as intelligence agents who have spotted and investigated potential agent recruits, have received information from intelligence agents and have served as links between these agents and intelligence officials of the East European satellite government concerned. These officials were ostensibly serving as diplomatic representatives in Free World countries.

As a general observation concerning intelligence work performed by friendship societies sponsored either by the Soviet Union or by East European Communist countries, it may be noted that a large part of their effort is directed toward the procurement of information which, in Free World areas, is generally considered overt: statistics pertaining to industrial and agricultural production, objectives and colorings of political groups, public opinion surveys, etc. But, in addition to information of unclassified nature obtained by these societies, there is sound evidence that certain individual members of the societies are being used to assist in the procurement of classified military and technical data.

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APPENDIX

Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations Sponsored  
by Communist Countries

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APPENDIX

Communist-sponsored societies of friendship and cultural relations reported through 31 July 1957 are listed here according to the sponsoring organizations. First are listed those sponsored, supported and guided by the Soviet All-Union Society for Cultural Relations Abroad (VOKS); then the societies of friendship or cultural relations with China are listed under the organization believed to be the Chinese equivalent of VOKS, The Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.

Following these are lists of societies sponsored by Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, North Korea, North Vietnam, Poland, Rumania and Yugoslavia. An organization which is apparently the equivalent of VOKS in the Mongolian People's Republic, namely, the Bureau for Cultural Cooperation Abroad, has been reported, but no friendship or cultural relations societies which it sponsors have as yet become known.

At the end of the list are a group of friendship/cultural relations societies which are possibly supported by one or more of the VOKS-type organizations, or possibly in some cases, are front organizations of the local Communist Party. In most cases the name of the country which appears first in the title of the friendship or cultural relations society shows the country in which the society is located. In cases where the location of the society is not clear from the title, the location has been parenthetically included before the name of the individual society.



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A. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

All-Union Society for Cultural Relations Abroad  
(Vsesoyuznoye obshchestvo kulturnoy svyazi zagranitsey, VOKS)

(Afghanistan) Friends of the Soviet Union  
Albanian-Soviet Friendship Association  
Institute of Argentine-Soviet Cultural Relations  
(Instituto de Relaciones Culturales Argentina-URSS, IRCAU)  
Australia-Soviet Friendship Society  
Austro-Soviet Friendship Society  
(Oesterreichisch-Sowjetische Gesellschaft)  
Belgian-Soviet Friendship Society  
(Amities Belgo-Sovietiques, ABS)  
Brazil-Soviet Cultural Institute  
(Instituto Cultural Brasil-URSS)  
(Bulgaria) Fatherland Front (This organization has absorbed the former society, the Central Council of the Union of the Bulgarian-Soviet Societies.)  
Burma-Soviet Cultural Association  
Burma-Soviet Friendship Association  
Canadian Russian Friendship Society  
Association of United Ukrainian Canadians (AUUC)  
Ceylon-USSR Friendship League  
Chilean-Soviet Cultural Institute  
(Instituto Chileno Sovietico de Cultura)  
Sino-Soviet Friendship Association (SSFA)  
Cuban Soviet Cultural Relations Institute  
(Instituto de Intercambio Cultural Cubano-Sovietico)  
Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship Society  
(Svaz Ceskoslovensko-Sovetskeho Pratelstvi)  
Czech-Soviet Institute  
(Ceskoslovensko-sovetsky Institut)  
The National Association for Cooperation between Denmark and the Soviet Union  
(Landsforening for Samvirke mellem Danmark og Soviet Unionen)  
(East Germany) Society for German-Soviet Friendship  
Finland-Soviet Union Society, or, Finnish-Soviet Union Society  
(Suomi Neuvostoliitto-Seuran, SNS)  
France-USSR Association  
(l'Association France-USSR)

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Algeria Society of Friendship with the Soviet Union  
Madagascar-USSR Association  
Greek-Soviet League  
Hungarian-Soviet Society  
(Magyar Szovjet Tarsasag, MSZT)  
Icelandic-Soviet Cultural Society  
(Menningartengsl Islands og Radstjornarrikjanna, MIR)  
Indo-Soviet Cultural Society  
(This replaced the dissolved Friends of the Soviet Union)  
Indonesian-Soviet Friendship League  
Irish-USSR Society  
Israeli-Soviet Friendship Congress  
(also referred to as the Israeli-Soviet Friendship League  
or Movement)  
The Italian Association for Cultural Relations with the  
USSR  
(Associazione Italiana per i Rapporti Culturali Con l'URSS)  
Japan-Soviet Friendship Society (JSFS)  
(Nisso Shinzen Kyokai)  
(Japan) New Arts Friendship Society (Possibly a VOKS  
sponsored organization)  
Japan-Soviet Mutual Aid Society  
(Nisso Sofu Kai)  
Society of Cultural Relations between Lebanon and USSR  
(Luxemburg) Society of Friendship with the Soviet Union  
Mexican-Russian Institute of Cultural Exchange  
(Instituto de Intercambio Cultural Mexicano-Ruso, IICMR)  
(Mexico) The Soviet Friendship Society  
(Sociedad de Amigos de la URSS)  
Netherlands-USSR Association (NU)  
(New Zealand) Society for Closer Relations with the USSR, (SCR)  
Korean-Soviet Cultural Society, or, Korean Society for  
Cultural Relations with the USSR  
Vietnam-Soviet Friendship Association  
(Hoi Huu-nghi Viet-nam Zo-viet, or, Hoi Viet Xo Huu-nghi)  
Northern Ireland Soviet Friendship Society  
Norwegian-Soviet Friendship Society  
Pakistan-Soviet Cultural Association (PSCA)  
Polish-Soviet Friendship Society  
(Towarzystwo Przyjazni Polsko-Radzieckiej, TPPR)  
Polish Soviet Institute  
Rumanian Association for Relations with the Soviet Union

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(Asociata Romana Legaturi cu Uniunea Sovietica, ARLUS)  
Rumanian-Soviet Friendship Society  
The Society for Advancement of Cultural and Economic  
Contacts between Sweden and the Soviet Union  
(Forbundet for framjande av kulturella och ekonomiska  
forbindelser mellan Sverige och Sovjetunionen)  
Switzerland-USSR Society, or, Swiss-Soviet Union Society  
(Association Suisse-URSS) (Gesellschaft Schweiz-Sowjetunion)  
(Syria) Society for Cultural Cooperation with the Soviet  
Union  
Tunisian Association of the Friends of the USSR  
(Association Tunisienne des Amis de l'URRS)  
The South African Society for Good Will and Friendship  
with the USSR  
National Council for British-Soviet Unity  
Russia Today Society of Great Britain  
Scotland-USSR Friendship Society  
British-Soviet Friendship Society  
(British) Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR  
Women's British-Soviet Committee  
Anglo-Soviet Youth Friendship Alliance  
Association of Friends of French Science and Culture  
(Set up in Moscow under the auspices of VOKS)  
Armenian Society for Cultural Liaison Abroad  
Kazakh Society for Cultural Relations with Abroad  
Soviet-Mongolian Friendship Society  
(Tadzhikistan) All-Union Society for Cultural Relations  
with Foreign Countries  
Ukrainian Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign  
Countries  
Slavic Union of Uruguay  
(Union Eslava del Uruguay)  
(This appears to be a Soviet-sponsored group.)  
Uruguayan-Soviet Cultural Institute  
(Instituto Cultural Uruguayo Sovietico, ICUS)  
Instituto Cultural Venezolano Sovietico  
(West Germany) Working Circle East  
(Arbeitskreis Ost, "AKROS")  
(Apparently a VOKS-sponsored organization)  
Nepal-Russian Friendship Association

S E C R E T

B. China

The Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (ACRFC). Headquarters address: Peiping, China  
This organization, formed in May 1954, appears to be the Chinese counterpart of the Soviet VOKS.

Argentine Association of Chinese Culture  
(Asociacion Argentina de Cultura China, AACC)  
Australia-China Society  
Belgian-China Society  
Brazilian-Chinese Cultural Society  
(Sociedade Cultural Sino-Brasileira)  
Burma-China Friendship Association, or, Sino-Burmese  
Friendship Society  
Burma Chinese Cultural Union  
Cambodia-China Friendship Association  
Chinese Canadian Welfare Association  
Ceylon-China Friendship Association  
Chilean-Chinese Cultural Institute  
(Instituto Chileno-Chino de Cultura, ICCG)  
China-Burma Friendship Association (CBFA)  
China-Egypt Friendship Association  
China-Finland Friendship Association  
China-India Friendship Association  
China-Indonesia Friendship Association (CINFA)  
(Indonesia) Peoples Cultural League  
(Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakjat, LEKRA)  
(Apparently the successor to the Chinese-Indonesian  
Cultural League)  
China Islamic Association  
Chinese Association for the Promotion of the Hui (Moslem)  
People's Culture  
China-Nepal Friendship Association  
China-Pakistan Friendship Association  
China-Thailand Friendship Association  
Sino-British Friendship Association  
China-Syrian Friendship Club  
Denmark Society for Cultural Contact with China, or,  
Danish-Chinese Society  
(Dansk-Kinesisk Selskab)  
Finnish-Chinese Society

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France-Chinese Friendship Association  
(Amities Franco-Chinoises)  
Iceland-China Cultural Association  
India-China Friendship Association  
(Sino-Indian Association, ICFA)  
Indonesia-China Friendship Association (INCFA)  
Italian Institute for Promoting Cultural and Economic  
Relations with China, or, the Center for Cultural and  
Economic Relations between Italy and China  
Japan-China Friendship Association (JCFA)  
(Nitchu Yuko Kyokai)  
Japan-China Cultural Exchange Association  
Luxembourg-Chinese Friendship Association  
Society of Mexican Friendship with the Chinese People,  
or, Mexican Society for Friendship with Popular China  
(Sociedad Mexicana Amistad Con China Popular)  
Nepalese-Chinese Friendship Association  
(North Vietnam) Vietnam-China Friendship Association  
(Hoi Viet Trung Huu-ngli)  
Pakistan-China Friendship Association  
(Philippines) Friends of China Youth Congress  
Polish-Chinese Friendship Society  
(South Vietnam) Vietnam-Cambodia-Laos-Communist China  
Friendship Association  
Sweden-China Society  
(Syria) Arab-Chinese Friendship Society  
Tunisia-China Association  
(Association Tunisie-Chine)  
(Union of South Africa) Friends of China Society  
(United Kingdom) British-China Friendship Association  
(Greece) Union of the Friends of People's China

C. Albania

Albanian Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries  
This is possibly the Albanian counterpart of the Soviet VOKS.  
If so, it presumably supports societies of friendship with  
Albania which are located in non-Orbit countries.

Association France-Albanie

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Italian Association for Cultural Relations with Albania  
Japan-Albanian Friendship Society

D. Bulgaria

Committee for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign  
Countries

(Komitet za priyatelstvo i kulturni vruzki s chuzhbina)

Address: Boulevard Ruski 5,

Sofia, Bulgaria

Probably the Bulgarian equivalent of the Soviet VOKS.

Austro-Bulgarian Society

Chilean-Bulgarian Institute of Culture

(Instituto Chileno-Bulgaro de Cultura)

Finland-Bulgaria Society

Indo-Bulgarian Friendship Society

Israel-Bulgaria Friendship League

Japan-Bulgaria Friendship Society

Swedish-Bulgarian Society

(United Kingdom) Society for Friendship with Bulgaria,

or, Committee for Friendship with Bulgaria

E. Czechoslovakia

In the case of Czechoslovakia, it appears that responsibility for friendship and cultural relations abroad is divided between the Ministry of Culture and the Czech Foreign Institute, with the latter concentrating particularly on Czechs residing in foreign countries.

American-Czechoslovak Association

Austro-Czechoslovak Society

Czech-Bolivian Friendship Center

(Centro de Amistad Czechoeslovaco-Boliviano)

S E C R E T

Chilean-Czech Cultural Institute (formerly, the Chilean  
Committee of Friends of Czechoslovakia)  
(Instituto Chileno-Czechoslovaco de Cultura, ICCG)  
Danish-Czech Society  
Finland-Czechoslovakia Society  
France-Czechoslovakia Association  
(Association France-Tchecoslovaquie)  
Indonesian-Czechoslovakian Friendship  
(Lembaga Persahabatan Indonesia-Tchecoslovakia)  
Israel-Czechoslovak Friendship League  
Italian-Czechoslovakian Cultural Association  
(Associazione Italiana per i Rapporti Culturali con la  
Cecoslovacchia)  
Japan-Czechoslovakia Friendship Society  
Czechoslovakian-Mexican Association  
Netherlands-Czechoslovakia Committee (also called the  
Committee for Cultural Relations between The Netherlands  
and Czechoslovakia)  
(Hoofdbestuur Nederland-Tsjechoslavijskije, NC)  
Pakistan-Czechoslovakia Friendship Association  
Sweden Czechoslovakia Society  
(United Kingdom) British Czechoslovak Friendship League  
(Uruguay) Czechoslovak Circle  
(Circulo Checoslovaco, CC)  
Greek-Czechoslovak League  
Mexican-Czech Cultural Institute  
(Instituto de Intercambio Cultural Mexicano-Checoslovaco)

F. East Germany

The Society of Cultural Relations Abroad  
(Gesellschaft fuer Kulturelle Verbindungen mit dem  
Ausland)  
This appears to be the East German counterpart of the Soviet  
VOKS.

Japan-East German Cultural Society  
The British Council for German Democracy  
Swedish Society to Improve Relations with East Germany

S E C R E T

G. Hungary

Institute for Cultural Relations  
(Lulturkapcsolatok Intezet) (Possibly Hungarian Equivalent of VOKS)

Austro-Hungarian Society  
(Oesterreichisch-Ungarische Gesellschaft)  
Chilean-Hungarian Cultural Center  
(Centro Cultural Hungaro-Chileno, CCHC or Centro Cultural  
Chileno-Hungaro, CCCH)  
(Chile) Club Concordia (An organization of Hungarian  
Communists and Communist sympathizers.)  
Danish-Hungarian Association  
Finland-Hungary Society  
France-Hungary Association  
(Association France-Hongrie)  
Italian Association for Cultural Relations with Hungary  
(Associazione Italiana per i Rapporti Culturali con  
l'Ungheria)  
Japan-Hungary Friendship Society  
Trieste-Hungary Association  
(United Kingdom) British Hungarian Friendship Society

H. Mongolian People's Republic

Bureau for Cultural Cooperation Abroad

I. North Korea

Korean Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries  
Possibly the North Korean counterpart of the Soviet VOKS.

Indo-Korean Cultural Society  
Japan Korea Council  
Japan-Korea Friendship Society (JKFS)  
Korean-Indian Cultural Society



S E C R E T

J. North Vietnam

The Department of Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries  
This is possibly the North Vietnamese counterpart of VOKS.

Burma-Indochina Cultural Association  
Vietnamese Union for Unity, Peace and Friendship with  
France  
(Union Vietnamienne pour l'Unité, la Paix, et l'Amitié  
avec la France)  
North Vietnam-France Friendship Association  
(United Kingdom) British Vietnam Friendship Committee  
Japan-Vietnam Friendship Association (JVFA)

K. Poland

The Committee for Foreign Cultural Cooperation (Komitet  
Wspolpracy Kulturalnej z Zagranicą, KWKZ) which was the  
Polish equivalent of the Soviet, VOKS, was scheduled to be  
liquidated on 1 January 1957. It is not known what Polish  
organization now sponsors the societies of friendship and/  
or cultural relations with Poland.

(Argentina) The Frederic Chopin Cultural Society  
(Argentina) Adam Mickiewicz Polish Culture Club  
Austro-Polish Society  
(Oesterreichisch-Polnische Gesellschaft)  
Belgo-Polish Friendship Society  
(Amitiés Belgo-Polonaises)  
Brazil-Poland Cultural Union  
Bulgarian-Polish Friendship Society  
(Chile) Friends of Poland Center  
(Centro de Amigos de Polonia, CAP)  
Danish-Polish Society  
Egyptian-Polish Friendship Society  
Finland-Poland Society  
(Suomi-Puola Yhdistys)  
French-Polish Friendship Association  
(Amitiés Franco-Polonaises)  
India Poland Cultural Society

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Israel-Poland Friendship League  
Italian Association for Cultural Relations with Poland  
(Associazione Italiana per i Rapporti Culturali con  
La Polonia)  
Japan-Poland Friendship Society  
(Mexico) Friends of the People's Republic of Poland  
(Amigos de la Republica Popular de Polonia)  
Netherlands-Poland Association  
(Vereniging Nederland-Polen, NP)  
(Poland) Polish-Egyptian Friendship Society  
(Poland) Polish-Indian Friendship Society  
(Poland) Polish-Slav Committee  
Sweden-Poland Society  
(United Kingdom) British Polish Friendship Society  
(Uruguay) Adam Mickiewicz Polish Society  
(Sociedad Polaca "Adam Mickiewicz")  
(West Germany) German Society for Cultural and Economic  
Exchange with Poland  
(United States) American Friends of Poland,  
(also known as Committee for Polish American Friendship)

L. Rumania

Rumanian Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations  
(Institutul Romin pentru Relatiile Culturale cu  
Strainatatea)  
Possibly the Rumanian counterpart of the Soviet VOKS

Argentine-Rumanian Cultural Association  
Belgium-Rumania Friendship Society  
Bolivian-Rumanian Cultural Center  
(Centro Cultural Boliviano-Rumano)  
Chilean-Rumanian Cultural Center  
(Centro Chileno-Rumano de Cultura, CCRC)  
Finland-Rumanian Society  
France-Rumanian Association  
(Association France-Roumanie)  
Icelandic-Rumanian Friendship Society  
Israel-Rumania Friendship League  
Italo-Rumanian Association  
(Associazione Italiana per i Rapporti Culturali con la  
Romania)

S E C R E T

Japan-Rumania Society  
Mexican-Rumanian Society of Friendship and Cultural  
Exchange  
(Sociedad de Amistad y de Intercambio Cultural Mexicano-  
Rumano)  
The Netherlands-Rumania Committee, (NR)  
or, Committee for Cultural Relations between the Netherlands  
and Rumania  
Norwegian Society for Cultural Relations with Rumania  
Swedish-Rumanian Association  
(United Kingdom) British-Rumanian Friendship Association

M. Yugoslavia

Commission for Cultural Ties with Foreign Countries  
Address: Bircaninova #6, Belgrade  
Probably the Yugoslav counterpart of the Soviet VOKS.

Argentine-Yugoslav Institute of Cultural Relations  
(Institute Relaciones Culturales Argentina-Yugoslavia)  
Chilean-Yugoslav Cultural Institute  
(Instituto Chileno-Yugoeslavo de Cultura)  
Association for Cultural Cooperation between Yugoslavia  
and France  
Netherlands-Yugoslavia Association  
(United Kingdom) The British-Yugoslav Association

N. The identity of the Communist organization which sponsors  
and supports the following friendship/cultural relations  
societies is not known.

(Ceylon) Soviet Union, People's China and People's  
Democracies Friendship Association  
(The Netherlands) The Association "Netherlands - Indonesia"

S E C R E T

(Norway) People's Democracies Friendship Society  
(Sambandet Norge-Folkeodemokratiene)  
(Syria) Afro-Asian Friendship Society  
(Possibly identical with the Arab-Chinese Friendship  
Society)  
(United Kingdom) British Malaya Friendship Committee

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